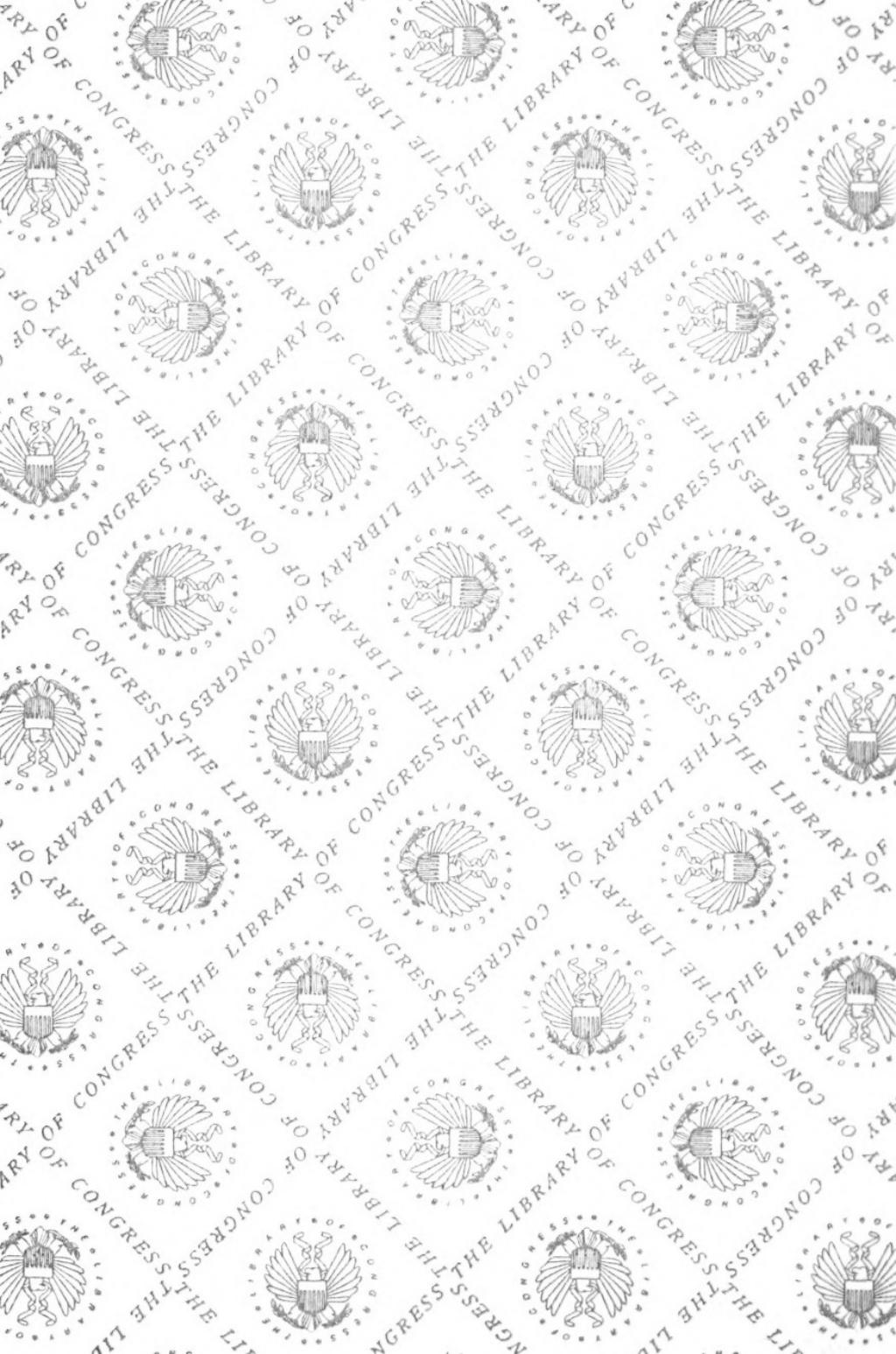
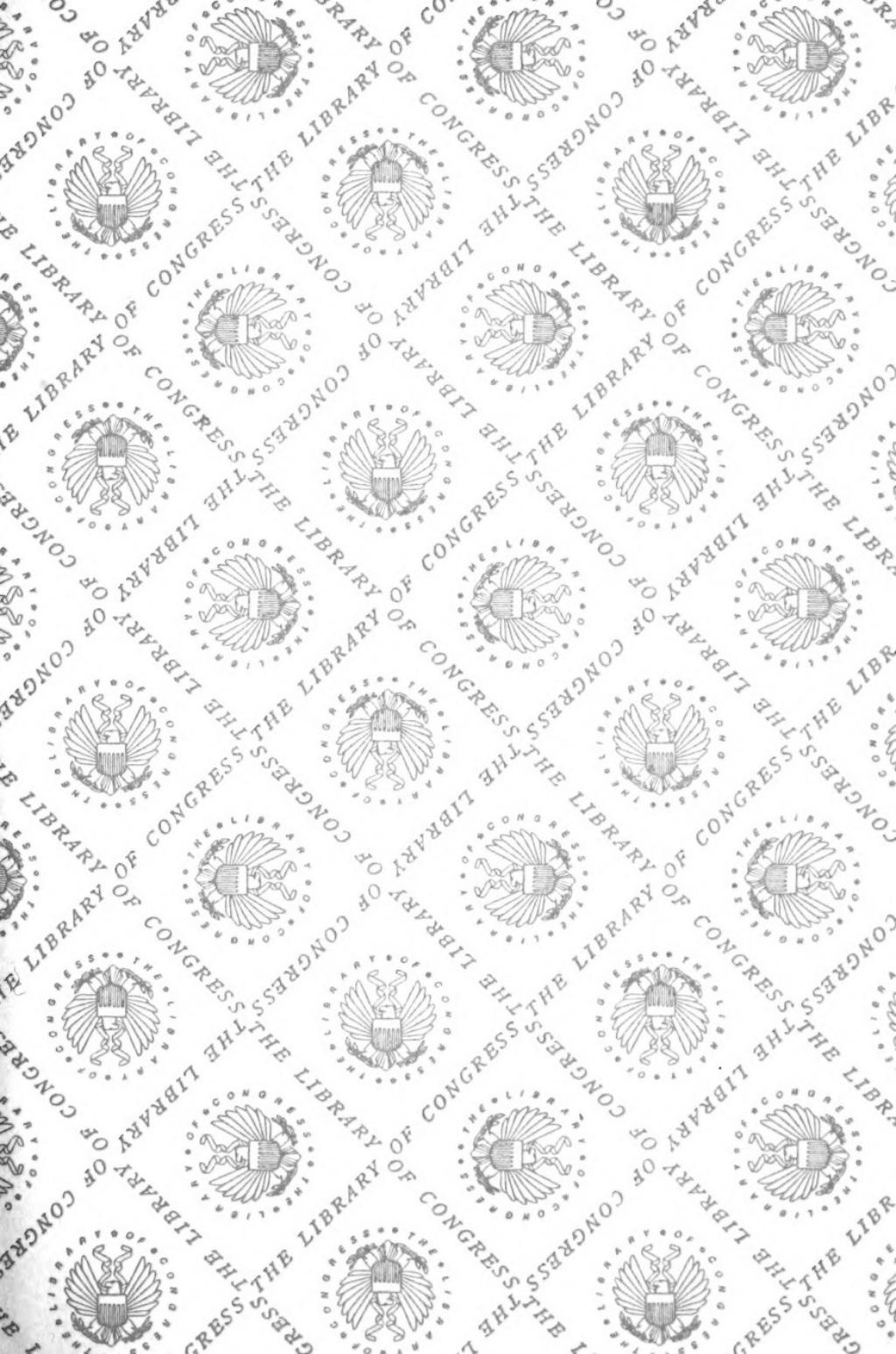


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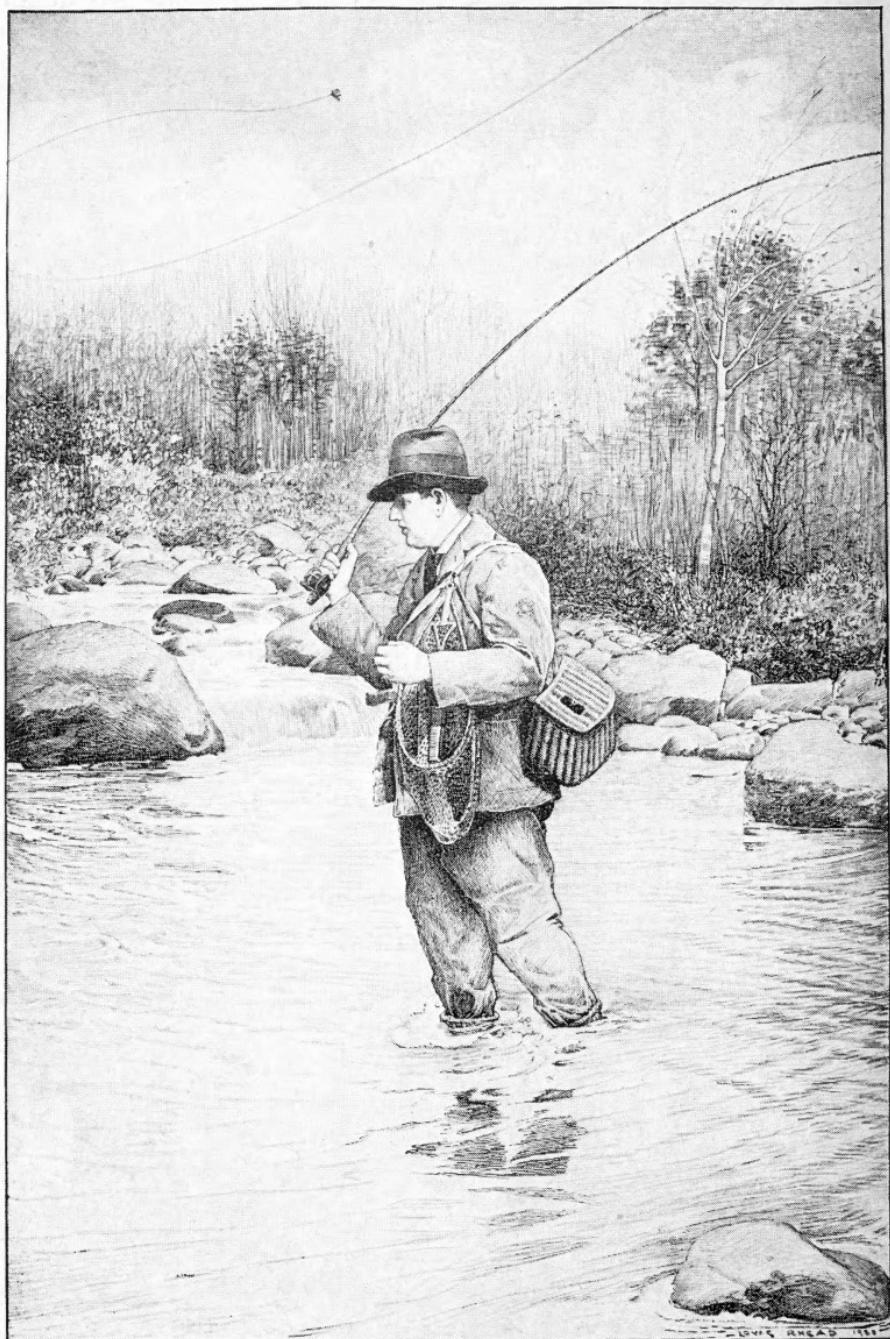
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Edward J. Mills Ex-Champion Dry Fly Caster on the Stream

# HOW TO FISH THE DRY FLY

DESCRIBING THE LATEST UP-TO-DATE NECESSARY  
TACKLE, ITS COST, AND WHERE TO GET IT.  
AND THE PROPER METHOD OF USING IT.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE AMERICAN  
AND ENGLISH DRY FLIES

ALSO

# HOW TO FISH VARIOUS NYMPHS

FROM THE BOTTOM UPWARDS IN PLACE OF  
WORMS IF TROUT DO NOT RESPOND TO FLIES  
EARLY IN THE SEASON OR  
DURING THE LATE  
SUMMER

*By*

LOUIS  
RHEAD

"  
A U T H O R O F

TROUT STREAM INSECTS :: BOOK OF FISH AND FISHING  
FISHERMAN'S LURES AND GAME FISH FOOD



PRIVately PRINTED AND ISSUED BY  
LOUIS RHEAD, 217 OCEAN AVENUE, BROOKLYN, N. Y., U.S.A.



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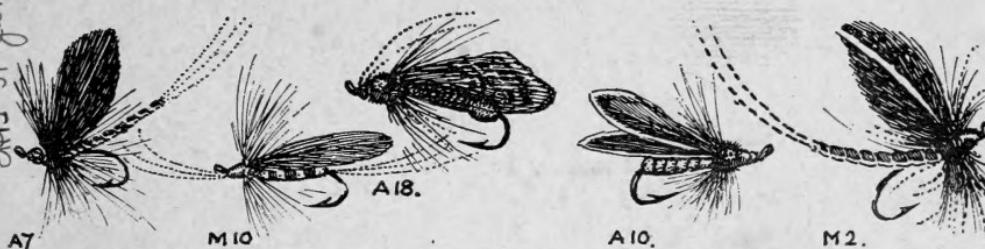
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# HOW TO FISH DRY FLY



## *How to Fish Dry Flies that Imitate American Trout Stream Insects*

### *The Floating Fly is More Widely Known*

The dry fly has made rapid strides in the estimation of American trout fishermen during the last ten years, so that the new art is now widely known all over the continent, although it is not, as yet, practiced to any great extent, for the reason that method and special tools have not been fully described in a simple manner. I believe every thoughtful trout angler wants to acquire the latest and best up-to-date information about dry fly fishing so that he may learn to test his skill in this most satisfying branch in the art of angling.

The object of this little booklet is to give a detailed, easily understood definition of the dry fly in compact form as a handy guide, to describe exclusively how the art may be practised on American streams with dry flies copied from native insects without any reference whatever to methods used on British streams; this field has been so well covered, not only by eminent English writers, Halford and others, but also by two expert American anglers, Emlyn M. Gill and George M. L. La Branche, who have described their views with great detail and compared the difference in the method pursued in England, as well as by themselves on our own streams. If it is the readers' desire to go further, and study the art more thoroughly from the British standpoint, they should get Halford's books from England, and read "Practical Dry Fly Fishing," by Emlyn M. Gill,

"The Dry Fly and Fast Water," by George M. L. La Branche, both will be found valuable to the angler in showing the adaptability of the dry-fly method to American streams. Both books are published by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. However, to be just with my readers, it is only right they should know that these two books were issued in 1914, two years before any classified list of American trout insects had been made, or my book on American trout stream insects had been published. So that their books exclusively refer to their use of English type dry flies. On page 41, in "Practical Dry Fly Fishing," the author says: "Whether English dry flies tied to resemble English insects, imitate exactly in all points similar insects common to American streams is a mooted question." This mooted question has been settled by the writer who has proved that English dry flies do not resemble in size, color, or form any of the American trout stream insects. Some English insects are similar to American, but there is always a difference in size or color of the artificial flies.

The strictly consistent rule laid down both by American and British dry fly experts is, whatever dry fly is used, it must exactly imitate the species of insect that trout are then taking as food, or at least the insects visible at the time on the water. If the reader has studied the "charts" in Trout Stream Insects, he will, to a certain extent, know at any time what kind of insects are likely to be rising by the period, temperature and time of day. The writer has practised dry fly fishing more or less for twenty-five years past, but not exclusively—his views being too broad to entirely ignore the great advantages of wet fishing, or even live bait and artificial lures on American streams.

There is no question whatever that the English dry fly will seduce American trout, especially *Fontinalis*, *fario* and *irridius*, but the same can be said of the old wet style favorites, and the new style nature flies. It is left entirely to the angler's judgment whether he prefers to fish with English dry flies that do not imitate our insects, or remains loyal to the old American favorites which do not imitate

insects, although now tied as floating flies for dry fly fishing, or, that he prefers to make a trial of those new nature flies tied expressly from careful pictures of living American insects. All three of these classes of flies are sold by Wm. Mills & Son, Park Place, New York City.

# DRY FLY TACKLE—THE ROD

*Casting the Fly is so Extremely Delicate*

The method of fishing with dry flies is so extremely delicate, artistic and precise, that it is almost compulsory to use the special tools now made for it. These special tools—rod, reel, line and leader are somewhat more expensive than what is used for wet fishing, yet, if reasonable care is bestowed on them, they will last so much longer as to be cheapest in the end.

When you buy a new rod, have it made to fit yourself. The length and weight all depends upon a man's physical power and build. Generally speaking, the short man requires a three to four ounce, eight and a half foot rod. Medium size man fits to a four ounce, nine foot rod. The large, heavy man can use—if so desired—a heavier weight, but anglers, big and little, buy their rods no longer than nine feet, four and a half to five and a half in weight. You cannot cast the dry fly accurately, or far, or properly handle a heavy fish with a very limber rod along with a heavy weight line.

It is conceded by many experts that Leonard rods are unapproached for dry fly fishing. They have no competitors in lightness, strength, or flexibility, and regular patterns of any weight or length are made suitable for both dry and wet fishing. If the amateur buys a Leonard, he should order the mountings oxidized and an additional agate guide in place of bottom guide on the butt of rod, and also agate guides on the two tips which greatly facilitates casting. The price of these rods is about fifty dollars.

## SOME “DON’TS” REGARDING RODS

Never lay your expensive rod on the ground while exchanging leader or flies; if you don’t step on it, an obliging companion will. Place the rod upright against bush or tree.

Always keep joints well oiled at end of season; if they stick, pull out without twisting.

Don't keep one tip idle till the other is worn out; interchange them frequently. Keep both working.

Take rod apart as soon as you quit fishing. Also take reel off for easy carrying.

Go through heavy bushes with tip in front, especially if leader and fly are in use.

Release a hooked snag with line, not rod.

Never lend or borrow favorite rods. If tip is injured send it to mender at once.

When climbing a fence or other obstruction give rod precedence.



Fig. 1. Rig  
for shallow  
water.

### DRY FLY TACKLE—THE REEL

In dry fly fishing the right kind of reel is of the utmost importance. The main points to consider are: Its weight should properly balance your rod; the barrel should have room and to spare for a dry fly tapered line. The click should be firm, and the reel should fit on the seat snug and tight yet be easily released. It should be constantly oiled, kept perfectly clean, and handle screws thoroughly tight. A very serviceable reel is the Leonard patent trout reel, made in the raised pillar style, light, strong and of ample line capacity—much lighter in weight than the larger reels made in the old round plate style. It is sold by Wm. Mills, price \$13.00. They sell another more expensive reel, specially made, and called the dry fly reel. Price \$22.00.



Fig. 2. Cast  
fly just above  
large fish.

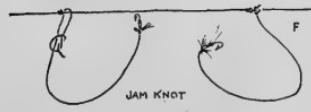
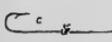
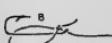


Fig. 3. Rig  
for deep water.

## DRY FLY TACKLE—THE LINE

There is no part of dry fly tackle so necessary to be perfect as the line; you depend entirely upon its perfect work to force the fly through the air and alight on the water like thistledown. Your line must be extremely flexible, yet of a weight in the thicker part that will carry well in the cast, though light enough at the taper to float and not drag the leader under water. The best lines are soft dressed, waterproof, that run freely through the guides. It must be tapered at both ends, from four to ten feet. A really beautiful line feels like velvet; it should never crease or get sticky; whatever the atmospheric conditions may be, it must not twist or kink and should be an olive or light brown tint, with a smooth dull polish. These requirements are necessary, because in dry fly casting the line is continually running back or forth through the guides much more than in wet fishing.

American experts and some writers advise the exclusive use of English made lines, the best of which are sold in this country by any good tackle dealer. The price runs from eight to twelve dollars, and even higher.



A very high-grade soft finish dry fly line is Mills' double tapered "Intrinsic," prices from \$7.00 to \$8.50. Sizes are G, F, E, D, the heaviest being D. The English lines are designated by letters D, E, F, the latter being heavier and larger in size. It is therefore essential to have line weight fit to weight of rod—a light rod to a light weight line—heavy rod—heavy line. The heavy line is the best suited for short casting. It will be best for the beginner to understand the choice of both line and rod is personal to the angler's build and strength of arm. The tapered dry fly line can be used for

wet fishing; indeed, the old style flat line should be entirely discarded for any kind of fly casting.

### POINTS ON THE CARE OF LINE

The first thing is to have your line wound on the reel as evenly as possible and see to it being unwound as far as the line has been wetted and carefully dried every time you quit fishing. Don't rub on deer fat or other grease to a new line to make it float better. After considerable use, day after day, the line becomes somewhat waterlogged, and deer fat *does* make it float better, but several English experts have lately stated that deer or other animal fat is injurious—which coincides with my own experience. They suggest some chemical called "Mucilin," which does not injure the dressing—yet it floats the line—also the fly. I believe the best way is to hang the line in the sun and wind to thoroughly dry it. Mucilin is sold in tins by Wm. Mills & Son.

If the line is in use a good deal it is wise to alternate the use of both ends. If the hook is fouled on rock or stump make every effort to save line breakage; far better to break at leader, because the tapered end is made so fine as to be about the thickness of attached leader; even a few inches of lost line is a great disadvantage and for that reason the tie to leader must be made to easily untie. With reasonable care the life of a good line is prolonged. When the end of the line loses its covering of dressing by frequent tying, don't cut an inch or two away, making it a less effective line; you can remedy the trouble by using a small brush and revarnish it with valspar.

## DRY FLY TACKLE—THE LEADER

Dry fly leaders should have a gradual taper from thick to fine, and made of extra long-length gut, furnished with one small loop at line end, the other thin end being left unlooped to be tied with a knot to eyed fly. The weight of gut depends on weight of line and rod—either light, medium, or heavy. The length of leader should measure from tip to middle of rod handle grasp so that you can hold the fly with same hand that grasps the rod. Good tapered leaders cost about sixty cents, superfine leaders made of special gut will cost a little more. Preparatory to fishing, a number of leaders should be placed in a box carefully coiled, between damp felt, so that when used the leader will fly out straight at the first cast, and the damp gut makes a more secure tie to the fly.

### POINTS ON CARE OF LEADERS

Dry your leaders after the day's fishing is done—they weaken if kept constantly wet. If leader breaks don't loop them together; learn to tie a secure knot, and tie it only when the gut is thoroughly wet. Don't loop gut to fly—learn the proper knot attachment here illustrated.

Test your leaders. Discard, or retie any frays or weak parts. For dry fly casting it pays to buy new leaders every season. Beware of leaders which taper too fine if the fish you capture are likely to weigh over a pound, especially in turbulent water.

I have found it to be much more convenient to buy gut by the different size hanks, and tie my own leaders. In so doing the angler suits his own requirements, exactly as to length and thickness, as well as a saving of considerable expense, and will be found of especial advantage by all anglers living far from up-to-date tackle shops.

## THE DRY FLY ITSELF

The reader will now perceive that fine, delicate dry fly casting requires the angler to be fitted with a properly balanced rod that is flexible, light, yet strong, a free running reel of proper weight, a line that tapers down to thickness of leader, and leader that tapers fine to the fly to make it speed through the air without obstruction, then drop gently on the water as near as possible like that of the natural insect. I consider it a waste of the reader's time to give details of who invented the dry fly, or a list of so-called experts who have practised and written down their opinions of what are the best dry or wet flies to most surely seduce trout. Indeed, such a situation seems to be comical in the extreme to quote the various opinions (both domestic and foreign) of what fly is best, for the very reason that the most experienced angler on earth is unable to tell in advance of arrival at the stream—*what insect is on the wing*, any more than he can foretell if it will rain tomorrow. When certain species of insects do rise to float down along the surface in vast or small numbers, then it is that trout are attracted and visibly feed. If we are consistent in our belief of the dry fly method, it is then only we can surely tell which dry or wet fly is best.

It is sheer buncombe for experts to give a list of *their favorites*. All flies are favorites to trout at their period of rising. The reason I capture more trout on the shad fly, cowdung, yellow sally and brown drake, is because their rise extends through April, May and June, while some others rise but a few days.

For the benefit of the amateur who never cast a fly, and the wet angler who honestly seeks to rightly know just what difference there is between a wet and dry fly, my answer is, the artificial dry fly has the upward wings split open—mostly curving outwards—often having wing feathers doubled to make them stiff and float better. The hackle is tied more bushy, partly pushed forward beyond the hook-eye.

## FLY ATTACHMENT TO LEADER

All the best dry flies are made on eyed hooks—none are made with a snell lashed to hook. Flies fastened to leaders by a loop is fatal to a feathery cast, so that it is absolutely necessary to learn how to properly attach gut-end to eyed hook with a neat, firm knot.

## FLIES MOST SUITABLE FOR SURFACE FISHING

The two principal classes of natural insects are defined in my book, "Trout Stream Insects," as drakes and duns. Each have their wings in exactly opposite positions, the drakes have wings raised from, and erect above the shoulders, and after they have risen from the bed to the surface of the stream, *they always float*. The duns have wings hanging from, and below the shoulders. *They do not rise* to the surface and float, but the natural dun creeper travels along the bed to the river side then climbs upon rocks and vegetation, where they emerge into the perfect insect, alighting on any object but the water's surface. To be consistent, to follow nature, as all dry fly purists say you must, it is perfectly clear that drakes are the only insects we should imitate to use as dry flies, and the duns copied to fish wet. Nevertheless, if the angler so desires, with the aid of dry fly tools and methods, any fly, erect or lapwing, can be made to float long enough for trout to seize it with the aid of a dash of paraffin by an angler of ordinary skill.

## WHAT FLY SHALL WE CHOOSE?

When we arrive at the stream, the first problem to solve is what artificial fly to use; for the beginner this problem is the most difficult and requires time and study. First we look over the water, the runways, eddies, lines of bubbles to find out what insects are on the surface; the size, the color, if possible, what species of insect. If insects are flying in the air, capture one. Note the color of its upper and under tail, its shoulders, color of feet and wings; then pull from your box of flies the nearest imitations of it. I leave

entirely to the angler himself what his previous choice in the tackle shop should be, either of Halford's English flies, or Rhead's American nature flies. The charts in "Trout Stream Insects" give a list of the most abundant insects that appear for each month of the season. There are many other species not mentioned in the chart which are almost the same. Should you find no drakes or upwing insects floating on the surface and that a greater number of duns or lapwing insects are on the wing, you can fish dry with a dun fly like the natural insect you see, or fish the duns wet with two or more flies, till later on when you see drakes floating, then fish with dry fly imitations. The beginner at first has to be under the guidance of tackle shop advice, which is rarely good, with one notable exception, that is, Wm. Mills & Son, who have several members of the firm practical anglers of experience and talented fly tyers.

It is quite different with the wet angler of experience. He is familiar with at least the old American favorites, and is well able to select a good stock of dry flies to start with in practising the newer method.

### DRY FLY METHODS—CASTING

The principal theory of dry fly angling is simply that of delicately casting an artificial fly to the surface so that it will float along with wings erect, or "cocked," over a rising trout, or in places where trout are supposed to lie. As trout almost invariably choose to lie underneath swift water, generally a few feet below large rocks where the water flow is curbed, the rule is to cast up stream against the flow of water about three feet above the fish, permitting the fly to float without drag or ripple over the fish, to then lift the fly up from the water without wetting it. In a long, deep placid pool, trout lie with head up stream and they should always be fished up from tail end of pool. There is absolutely nothing for the expert wet fisherman to learn in casting the dry fly if supplied with proper tools for it. It is merely a change of method. The first difference is that the wet fisherman has two or more flies on the leader, the

dry angler has but one fly. The preliminary dry cast is performed by holding the rod upright, the right hand is moved slowly back and forth while the left hand continually draws more line from the reel and the fly is kept in the air till sufficient line is out for the fly to reach the desired place you wish to have it drop on the surface, which is usually a few feet above the rising trout, when a slight check to the line should be made. After a little practice you can keep a fly in the air indefinitely with twenty to forty feet of line out. You can move from one place to another with a gentle motion of rod top making the fly sail through the air. The rod movement must be slow and the tip descent for the fly to alight slower still. The tip must be made to point exactly to a couple of feet above the desired spot and careful calculations made as to the distance which after some practice becomes remarkably correct, even to a few inches. Accuracy is the most important, that is, to place the fly perfectly, so that it floats exactly over the fish, a difficult feat that only comes by considerable practice. Safer casting is more possible if you are wading, without back impediments. Naturally, the fly goes as far back as it does in front, so that must always be carefully considered.

### CASTING UP STREAM AND ACROSS

In deep swift rivers, where it is impossible to wade against the heavy flow, or deep water prevents wading in the stream, you should cautiously approach the tail of a rising trout, which always lies with head up stream. Cast up and across for the fly to float down till you see it begins to sink. Gather in surplus line to enable you to lift the fly clear off the surface back in the air, then, with a waving motion back and forth several times to dry the fly, cast again. Or, if you prefer, make a few steps forward to cast. You will cast more accurately, cock the fly better, and keep it dry by making short casts of twenty or thirty feet. A long cast across heavy currents, is sure to cause the fly to sink.

## FISHING THE RISING TROUT

Trout rise spasmodically, being induced to rise by periodic gluts of floating insects, most frequently in greater abundance along eddies and runways. Under these runways trout invariably lie in selected places of their own, one after another in a long line, the larger fish being where greater numbers of insects pass over them. I have seen a line of from twenty to fifty large trout all rising to a glut of insects; at such a time the wet angler fails, while the dry angler with the correct imitation will capture one after another in quick succession, by choosing a situation where he can easily cast to the larger fish. Should it happen the first choice of fly is not taken, try the same on another fish, time being precious to change flies. If trout still refuse a fly that properly floats, then put on a smaller fly. Don't drive them from feeding with too frequent or careless casts. Keep below them, cast short and light; allow the fly to float as long as possible, lifting off in the most delicate manner, because these glut rises are always of short duration—never more than thirty minutes. When the glut rise ends, it is useless to continue fishing, they are full of food for the time, and will not respond to your efforts, so move to another place, perhaps to luckily find another insect glut. For those large solitary fish, generally browns or rainbows, that choose to haunt places just below submerged rocks, the floating fly is most effective, and if you can, get within fifteen feet to make short casts to just above the rock, so that the fly will float down along the edge of rapid water, you are bound to get a quick response.

In easily waded little rivers like the Willowemoe at De Bruce, where trout average half a pound or under, dry fly fishing is comparatively simple by wading up the middle of the stream. One great objection to it is by using small dry flies most of the time you are catching so many undersized fish. Similar conditions to worm fishing, except your method is superior.

## FISHING WHERE TROUT ARE NOT RISING

Glut rises are not frequent. You will see isolated insects dropping to the surface almost any time, then periods occur when no insects are on the surface or in the air. These almost barren periods occur through April, after the middle of June, in July and August, with notable exceptions when a small rise of duns come up, mostly afternoons and evenings. All through May and the first half of June big rises occur every day, sometimes of several species at once.

When barren periods occur, if you have some little knowledge of trout haunts, you can try to induce them up to the surface with a well cocked fly. Make a test at such places precisely as if casting to rising fish, with half a dozen casts at each place. The proper fly to choose is impossible to tell unless you have studied my book "Trout Stream Insects," which fully describes what time of day and period of season the various insects develop and rise to the surface.

Without such a guide you can choose some fly that will imitate insects seen the day previous. Failing that make tests, and change your flies till trout do respond. Such tests will teach you more and be of greater service than if you pick out a fly from some "expert's" favorite list, which, if successful, is of no value in solving the problem. What is required is a systematic method acquired by your own practice.

## CROSS CURRENTS—LINE DRAGGING

The dry fly is so light that wind and current make it impossible, at times, to cast a long distance with any degree of accuracy. One current will force the fly down to you twice as rapidly as another current allows the heavy line to run, thus—to cause the line to belly out, forcing the fly from the course intended, to rapidly drown. In such cases, lift the line from the current, recast, if possible, a shorter line from another situation. There is no cure for a dragging line except to fish where the current assists instead of inter-

fering. On very windy days, it is far easier to fish down stream with wet flies, unless the wind is in your favor, blowing up stream. But winds are so changeable on winding mountain streams that the dry fly can be laid aside till ideal weather returns.

### DRY AND WET FISHING COMPARED

For many years much controversy has been wasted on the subject as to which method is best, and latterly as to its use by American anglers on their own streams. They are here compared now only to show the difference as to tackle and methods. More or less, about seventy-five per cent of American anglers fish the old style wet fly exclusively. More than half of them use indifferent tackle, flies and method. It is those I wish to reach to inform them how much they lose in their sport, and how easy it is to learn a superior style in the art of fishing. The other half, scattered over the northern zone, are doubtless all experts in the art of wet fishing, some of whom I know want the information here given.

Many dry anglers say they capture larger fish by that method than they do with wet flies. I am convinced by my own experience of dry fly fishing there is more real sport, a higher art, and the enjoyment in a better knowledge of animated nature to be seen along a trout stream.

Dry fishing has several advantages over wet, the most important are that trout leap more frequently, and you may observe trout take the fly, and the resistance is more apt to be near the surface. Your interest is more keen when fishing with flies like the insects you see, and in time you get to distinguish one from another. You also acquire a better knowledge of trout habits, ways of feeding, and where they lie in wait for insects, which are their principal diet. It is indeed an interesting study to watch the transition from the creeper state, and the wonderful development into the perfect insect.

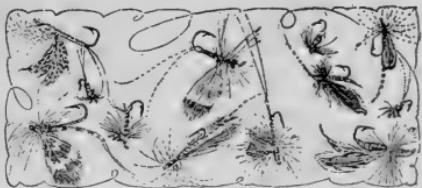
The method of casting creates a desire for style and accuracy, drying the fly induces a more delicate handling

of the rod, and the finer tackle used makes it imperative you play the fish with the utmost caution and skill.

On the other hand fishing wet has none of these finer qualities, nor is your interest aroused to such a degree in method or style. Wet fishing with several nondescript flies in mid or bottom water is just a chance game till the fish takes the fly. Very interesting, but it can be made doubly so, and should be improved by the adoption of several things —such as the tapered line and leader; snells tied to leaders by a knot instead of loops; by the use of flies copied from natural insects.

Wet fishing has too many advantages to ignore it entirely, particularly in deep swift water, where the fario and irridius always attain their greatest size—invariably to haunt the deep pools utterly oblivious to the dry fly, rising to insects at rare intervals. Wet fishing down stream in shallow rapids has fruitful results, covering as you can with a long line the entire stream and both banks on wet or windy days. The best results attained in wet fishing are when you move a cast of flies rapidly through a runway, or permit it to travel along the water flow near the surface of the runway. The controversy has not been settled, many wet fishermen claim the wet method capture the most fish. But the capture of fish is of minor importance. The true sportsman angles for pleasure in the game, and he certainly gets more in the higher art of fishing with a dry fly.

# HOW TO FISH THE NYMPH



## *The New Art of Nymph Fishing on the Bottom for Trout*

Trout anglers will doubtless be pleased to learn of the latest up to the minute details of this new method as practised by British anglers on their chalk streams. I have just learned from Mr. Sherrington, angling editor of the famous London *Field*, some facts concerning the new art of nymph fishing—a combination of dry and wet fishing that reaches up to the highest form in the angler's art—which I shall briefly describe what little is known, as yet.

While our own outdoor magazines continue to beat the big drum about worms, plugs, bugs and hogskin, with pictures of trout and bass to prove their efficiency, they and their readers still remain utterly in the dark concerning the rapid strides now being made in the higher art of fly fishing.

It must first be understood that British chalk streams are situated in the south of England, running between rich, fertile chalk hills that filter the water clear as crystal. These meadow streams are deep, slow moving, inducing a thick abundant growth of aquatic plants and weeds, which provide a vast amount of trout food. The most famous streams are the Itchen, Test and Avon, all in the county of Hampshire, where most of the British expert trout anglers practise dry fly fishing.

American and Canadian trout streams are entirely different in character, being almost invariably rapid, usually shallow, to run over stony or sandy beds, without aquatic growth. For that reason my own practice in nymph fishing for trout must of necessity be modified to meet American

trout stream conditions and the insects that breed in them. The discerning angler knows that the nymph is in a transitory state between the river bed creeper and the adult trout insect—known as “drakes.” Each one of the millions that rise must ascend through midwater to the surface, during which time the alert trout gorge and feed on them in transit. They are wingless, with fat, luscious bodies, varied in size and color, according to the species, the greater part having a pale, yellowish tint, some quite pink and others black or dark gray.

Drake creepers, indeed all aquatic insects, while in the creeper state are not available as food for trout because they are out of sight, burrowing in the mud or sandy bottom from three to eighteen inches deep below the water.

Thus it is that nymphs of insects are hatched on the bottom throughout the trout season, and by their daily appearance traveling through the water to the surface furnish abundant natural food just close to where trout abide, so that it is not at all surprising to find trout at different periods unresponsive to our dry flies cast on the surface, or even our wet flies played just under the surface.

Trout are then feeding on these wingless nymphs, the winged artificial fly is not then attractive to trout. Such is the condition that this new art of nymph fishing has been developed to meet, and from my own tests I believe it will rapidly become a popular method with all the fly casters after they acquire the necessary skill and learn which nymph to use and the right way to play it. Anglers will learn more by their own practice than by precept, or anything described to them, outside the method and tools required. It is best to use dry fly tackle for nymph fishing, although you fish from the bottom up, at times the surface cast will get a rise.

Wm. Mills & Son, New York, carries in stock several imported nymphs, one of which has a pink body that is said to have proved effective on our streams. The firm also has three of Louis Rhead's new correct imitations of the natural nymph found in Pennsylvania and Catskill streams. One, made in yellow, is in imitation of the gray drake creeper

and others of a similar color, but smaller in size. Another is a general tone of pink to imitate several insect creepers that have the body of a pink or red orange color. The third is in black and silver to imitate the creepers of the black dose, chocolate, marsh brown and other species with bodies dark in color, which are more abundant later in the season.

Many anglers succeeded in getting trout on my yellow and black nymphs during the last three seasons; quite a few suggested a change from a long shank hook to a short one, same size as the No. 6 dry fly hook. Both long and short are good, according to depth of water, the short shank being best suited to shallow water.

While testing the new nymphs late this fall I found it best to use a detachable weighted snell to have the nymph drop quickly to the bottom. Cut off an old fly from a loose snell and at the end fasten on a single bird shot, then fasten the snell to first knot of leader, about ten inches up. If the leader is bent into a position to allow the nymph to float away with water flow and the lead end of line on the bottom the position is right, with "lifts" very slow to the surface, then back, and repeated several times you get a fair imitation of nymphs rising to the surface. Should it happen you see a rise or you wish to play the nymph dry fly fashion, you unslip the leader snell loop off the leader, to leave the nymph at end of leader.

I can predict a quick rise in popular esteem for nymph fishing at opening of the season, in place of the old style worm fishing.

Nymph fishing at the bottom requires that you cast down stream, the best places being along runways, in about three or four feet of water—indeed, the deeper the water the chances are more favorable. Nymph creepers never abide in the shallows, especially if the water is swift; slow moving waters are the best places to make your casts, which need not be over twenty-five feet from you.

To play the nymph dry fly fashion you must cast upstream in similar situations. Wet fishermen unfamiliar with dry methods can learn it with very little practice as described in a previous chapter on casting.

It has already been stated the nymph would quickly supplant the worm. It will do more than that—taking a distinctly important part of the craft to enable you to get trout when neither flies nor worms will do so. For bottom fishing it is not necessary to use a single nymph on the leader—two or even four can be tied on at the same time, they should all be of different size and color, to do so you follow nature, which at times furnishes many species of creepers to appear simultaneously.

Within the short period that I learned of the British method I have not had much opportunity to make conclusive tests. Trout anglers themselves must take a hand to make the method perfect in this country, just as I endeavor to do. I can copy exactly from the natural creeper and insect a perfect artificial imitation, which should in particular be tested in Canadian and Maine waters where the largest trout are available. British nymphs are exceedingly small, far too small for my choice, and while I stated they are wingless—all are tied with a tiny pair of undeveloped wings about one-sixteenth of an inch that lie flat on the shoulder.

The bodies are all thick and hairy—in fact, any of our popular flies with wings pulled off will make some sort of a nymph if the body is fat and the hackle bushy. I am not as yet sure, but I surmise that the right method of fishing nymphs will prove more effective to get trout than any particular kind of nymph—in other words, there is little choice between them. The more important thing is to have the nymph wiggle slowly from the bottom up to the surface then back again. At the slightest touch made by the trout be alert to jerk the wrist quickly; the remaining work to be done is exactly like playing a fish on a fly.

Every angler knows of the danger from sunken baits getting snagged in fishing the rough stony bed of our streams,

for that reason use very small shot placed one above the other, according to the force of the water. Such small shots on the leader are not considered dangerous by the trout. A large shot is bound to get fast between the stones to cause no end of trouble and loss of time. Water of medium force will carry a light lead along, sometimes floating it ten to fifteen inches from the bottom. In quiet pools, one shot is more than enough, and the "lifts" can be worked perfectly natural with the rod tip.

Early in the season streams are usually very full, with strong currents, so that heavier sinkers are required. A good place to drop the lead is between two eddies just below a half submerged rock, the favorite haunts of big browns and rainbows. For small brook trout of nine or ten inches that prefer the rifts and shallow, swift waters, the lead should be allowed to run along fifty or more feet ahead, then worked from side to side reeling slowly backward. In such water late this season I was very successful to hook several doubles by placing an extra small size trout helgramite at the end of leader with two nymphs placed above, fishing in much the same manner as the wet angler fishes his three flies.

In lakes where trout lie deep longer size nymphs are best—use three on the leader—first casting to likely places, then, with slightly heavier sinker, try very slow trolling so that the nymphs travel along as near the bottom as you can.

The art of nymph fishing is not intended to replace fly fishing, but rather a change of method and new lures never before thought of, to entice trout only when they won't take flies. You will find it a most desirable substitute for that disagreeable and dirty habit of fishing with a worm. Don't imagine, brother angler, your worming companion is going to do better than you. He will get catfish, eels, sunfish, perch and chubs, but you will get the trout. The worm fisher rarely succeeds better than the fly fisher who understands his methods fully and fishes with reasonable intelligence. Aside from that you are a far better sportsman

with flies or nymphs and your success with them is a personal achievement of real worth.

To those anglers who are amateur or expert in the art of fly tying I would strongly advise them, study nymphs. Get a few for patterns and tie some for their own use. Nymphs are more easily made, and should they happen to construct several killers the triumph can be enjoyed with keen relish.

My sole object in introducing this new lure is to furnish the more thoughtful angler with a subject that leads him to angling of a better sort, to follow it up in study of aquatic insects and most interesting study of trout food. The angler who fishes alone for fish has no conception what the real art of angling is or the personal delight the student of nature enjoys.

Dry fly fishing created quite a rumpus among our anglers several years ago because it was something new, and really an advance in the art of angling. I have met quite a number of anglers on various streams this last few years, and the burden of their talk is mostly: "I fish nothing but the dry fly." "And do you succeed better than by the old wet style?" The answer is usually: "Well, yes, I get bigger fish and certainly have more fun in the game." All these answers correspond exactly with my own experience, though I don't entirely drop wet fishing or even artificial lure fishing. The artistic temperament requires a change now and then, especially in so uncertain a pastime as fishing for trout.

As an example of the uncertainty mentioned, I was fishing at the end of this last May with two Brooklyn friends, father and son, in that splendid Beaverkill pool known as "Buck Eddy." While we were preparing to fish there came down a splendid rise of march browns, and the pool for fifty yards was soon a boiling mass of trout. The young fellow was so excited as to exclaim: "I'll bet there are five hundred fish jumping." There certainly were at least seventy trout from ten to eighteen inches long.

Unfortunately I was that day fishing exclusively artificial lures, and for the entire half hour of the rise I only

hooked one rainbow. My companions with wet flies hooked but one fish. Had we been provided with dry fly tackle and a dry march brown on the leader, fishing up the pool, it is possible we should have bagged six brace of fish each. I say "possible"—it might have been none at all. I have experienced these remarkable glut rises many times, especially of the shad fly, and many times failed before I learned the art of fishing the dry fly. A nicely cocked march brown floating down alongside the natural insects surely does the trick, and I know the same things will happen with nymphs—when they, too, rise in great numbers.

### BOTTOM LURES FOR TROUT

Before concluding the subject of the nymph as a bottom bait perhaps trout anglers will be interested to know of several other new trout baits that I discovered and introduced which have already become favorite lures with a great many expert anglers fishing far Western streams, also in Canada and Maine. I allude to the little trout helgramite, the caddis creeper, a tiny crawfish and cricket. With the exception of the cricket all are fished at the bottom, where the natural creatures they correctly imitate abide.

Only within the last few weeks I came across an extremely interesting article printed in the first "report" of the Fish and Game Commission of New York State, written by my old friend, the late Nelson A. Cheney, on "Natural Food of Trout."

Every angler should read it, I'm sure they will have great benefit from its perusal. Among other things he mentions: "While expert fishers have for centuries been devoting all their energies to the fly alone as a lure for trout, they forgot, or perhaps were not aware of the many bottom creatures serving as food for trout that could be made of practical use either as natural baits or fair imitations of them." Strangely enough, he mentions two creepers that I have since made artificial imitators of that have proved effective lures, without my knowing of his suggestions. The most popular of these trout lures is the little trout helgramite,

the creeper of a species of stone fly. It furnishes considerable food for brook trout in the early spring while creeping along over the pebbles from midstream to the shore, where it crawls up stones or vegetation to change into the winged insect. Not only have I caught on it the three trout species, rainbows, browns and natives, but many other fish take it—chub, dace, perch, bass, pickerel and even eels.

All this goes to show that heretofore by confining our efforts to the surface, or near to it, with flies, minnows and worms, we missed, we entirely ignored, the very situation where trout habitually lie, *viz.*, the bottom, only at times darting upward for surface food and immediately returning to the bottom. It is therefore apparent that we should modify our fishing, and each individual angler should endeavor to develop methods to place before the trout a lure, natural or artificial, like that upon which it is then feeding. If you play the lure with a fair degree of skill where trout lie you are bound to capture it, especially so at seasons when trout won't take flies.

Personally I much prefer fly fishing, dry and wet, and if I cannot do that I most certainly won't dig worms. Such business can be left for the young kiddies, who are aware of nothing better. In past years I have lost a good deal of sport, many a time when trout were amiably inclined. I have forced myself from the fun of catching them to sit by the riverside to make drawings of the particular food they were eating. I am now and shall in the future get the reward for my patience in the extra pleasure of fishing a new and better style, and much better results. I also ardently desire that other anglers shall share in it—by making and using their own lures and baits in a sane and rational manner.

This August I was fishing with a young friend in rather wild water in the lower Beaverkill for bass with very poor luck. Whether the bass had gone back to the Delaware or whatever the cause, we got no fish. In casting out to a swift run-way my friend hooked a nice large fish. After considerable play, both in and out of the water, he shouted across, "It's

a rainbow." "What lure?" I asked. He replied, "A little artificial crawfish." I was sure he would land the trout because the bait had a good, stout sneck hook to hold.

This success gave me considerable pleasure because the lure was made for bass, and the capture of a good sized rainbow was a feat of additional satisfaction, having previously captured the bass on the same little bait. The crawfish was allowed to go anywhere with the water flow and, passing over the fish, possibly near the bottom, it succeeded where a cast of flies would have surely failed. I mention this as one of many instances to prove how important bottom fishing is to furnish sport when results are poor under ordinary fly fishing methods.

Fishing conditions in England are so different from our own we cannot always adapt their new ideas and suggestions as to methods, although I am conscious of the fact they have always been ahead of other countries in the fine art of fishing—indeed, almost every outdoor sport. In the problem of scientific study of new methods to advance the art of angling they are pioneers in the right direction that calls forth our respectful attention.

To recapitulate the chief points. I want to see anglers getting as much sport and fish on the bottom as they do by fishing the surface. To make their trips not so much fishing for fish as fishing for pleasure, by including a study of fish food, fish habits and general nature research along a trout stream. To capture and land many fish all the time would become wearisome, especially small fish, but you can take a just pride in making with your own hands an artificial copy of the food trout eat and with it deceive and capture the wary, adroit antagonist, which is something worth while.

One great advantage in fishing these bottom lures is that you are more sure to get the large sized fish than small ones, and the method is so easy and simple as to make your day's fishing a delightful experience, and more often a fuller creel of trout.

Several letters have been received from anglers who have difficulties to get trout in the waters they fish, and they

think nymph fishing will exactly solve the problem. The same difficulty is everywhere apparent, and in Catskill streams, like Esopus and Beaverkill, there are pools I know for certain contain many large fish; there were times when the devil himself seemed to have a hand in preventing every angler, expert or duffer, from getting even a "sign" of a trout. I know a Scotch angler, a splendid fly caster, whom I met on the stream fishing a gob of worms nearly as large as his fist. "Bob," said I, "what on earth are you trying to get?" His reply was, "I'm sick of casting flies, which I've stuck in my hat, and I hope to choke them with meat." Just to tease him, from across the stream I held up two nice fish from my creel, which made him yell across, "Oh, go to that region where they don't have to use coal."

Just a final word concerning the rig for nymphs. Be sure to use a nice tapered leader with the nymphs tied neatly, and it is far better to have any number of very small shot than one or two large sinkers—for two reasons, the large sinker gets fouled in the pebbles and scares the fish. Try to place the nymph where you think trout lie; don't let it stay in one place; lift it slowly up several times; then move to another situation. If trout do not take the nymph after two or three lifts they are either not inclined or are not there. Use small sized nymphs early in the season, either pink, yellow or any light color. Early in May the larger size yellow or dark color should be tried. One of my correspondents writes: "I would rather fish the nymph up stream because I can get much nearer the trout—in fact, I could drop it nicely nine feet ahead right over the trout's nose."

Personally I like best to wade right down stream casting forward to each bank, then lead the nymph in slow moves toward the middle. In slow running river deep pools a light float will assist in carrying the nymph along the bottom, where you cannot always wade or reach in casting. The float keeps up the line, especially in lake fishing. Of course, it is important to have the float adjusted to the right depth of water, *viz.*, the nymph to be from six to twelve

inches from the bed of the water. Chuck out for good the dirty worm and make a trial of a better style—that is, bottom fishing with nymphs and other lures.



Natural Drake Fly



Natural Dun Fly



Natural Nymph Creeper

# DRY FLY EQUIPMENT

**RODS** H. L. Leonard Tournament Catskill Fly Rod, 8 feet long,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to  $3\frac{3}{4}$  ounces, is a model very much favored by expert American dry fly anglers; it is plenty strong and powerful enough for the general run of stream angling.

The H. L. Leonard Tournament Fly Rod, 9 feet,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  to  $4\frac{3}{4}$  ounces, is an old favorite and is particularly suitable for large stream and lake fishing; it is used extensively in England and France by dry fly anglers.

William Mills & Sons' "Standard" Fly Rod, 9 feet long, 5 ounces, is a serviceable dry fly rod; also the 8 feet rod, weighing  $4\frac{1}{2}$  ounces, is suitable for this style of angling.

"Nonpareil" Rod, 9 feet long,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  ounces, and also the 8 feet,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  ounce rod, are suitable for dry fly work.

"Peerless" Rod, 9 feet,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  ounces, or 8 feet,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  ounces.

"Paragon" Rod, 9 feet,  $5\frac{3}{4}$  ounces, or 8 feet,  $4\frac{3}{4}$  ounces.

The above list includes rods of all grades, from the best at \$50 each to the cheapest grade that will do satisfactory work at \$9.50 each.

**REELS** H. L. Leonard style, 3 or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches diameter.

William Mills & Sons' "Kennett," an English type reel with revolving plate, made of aluminum.

"Neversink" Reel, rubber and nickel silver.

"Cresco" Reel, an American made revolving plate reel.

All the above reels are made in the narrow style that allows quick winding of line; prices from \$25.00 to \$6.50 each.

**LINE** It is very necessary, to be successful in fly casting, that your line be of proper weight to balance your rod. If, when ordering line, you specify the make and weight of rod, we can furnish line suitable for it.

For rods weighing from  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to  $4\frac{3}{4}$  ounces the proper lines to use are E tapered and F level.

For rods weighing from  $4\frac{3}{4}$  to  $5\frac{3}{4}$  ounces the proper lines to use are E or D tapered or E level.

In making short casts such as are used in this style of fishing, you need a line one size larger than ordinarily used on your rod for the down stream fishing, as the shortness of line out makes it imperative, in order to get the rod to cast properly, that the line should be heavy,

William Mills & Sons' "Intrinsic" or soft finish lines run in price from \$7.00 to \$9.00; their "Imperial" or harder finish line runs from \$3.00 to \$5.00 in price.

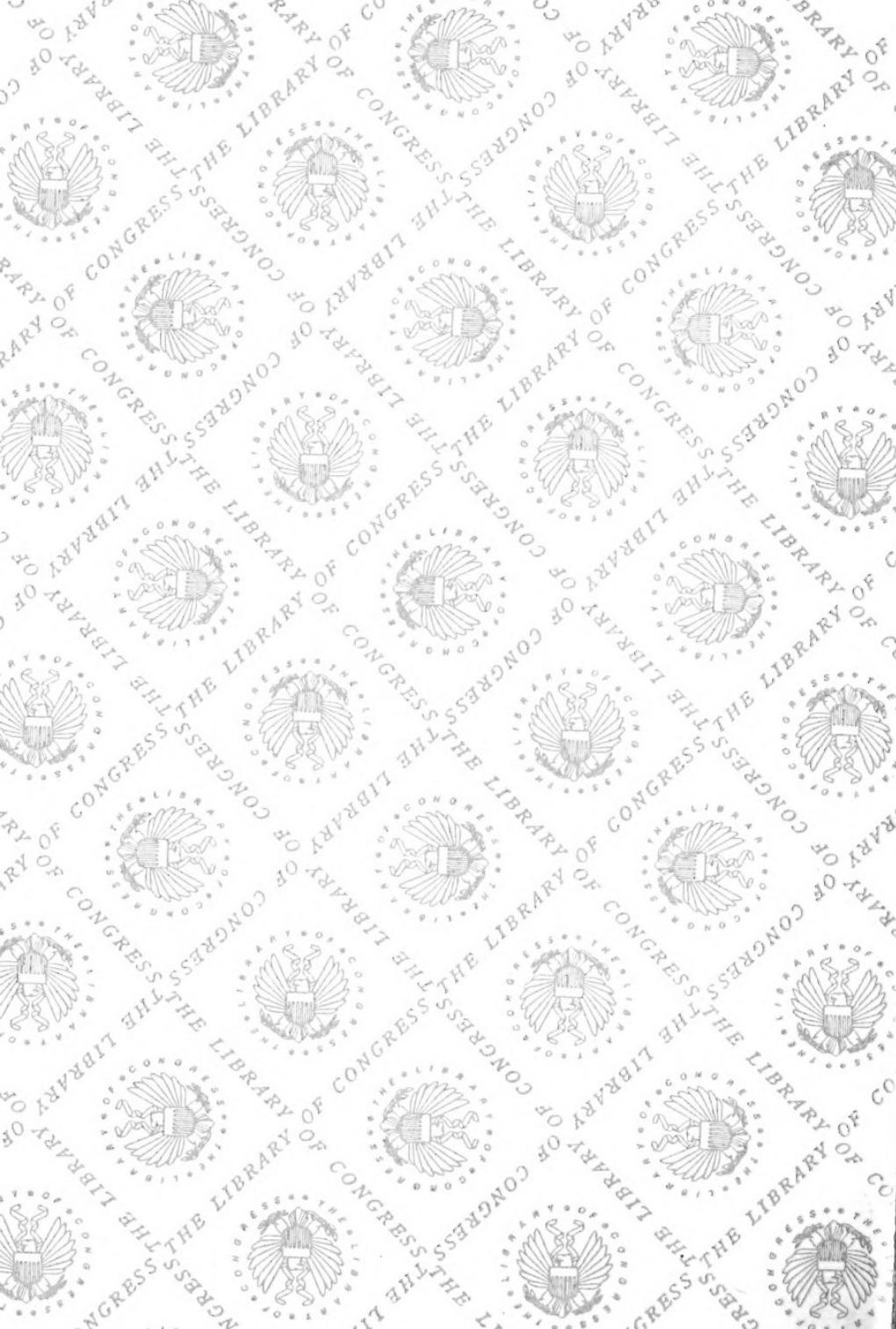
**LEADER** The leader used should be about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet long, heavy at the line end and tapered quickly to light at the fly end. It is usual in this style of fishing to use only one fly, but for those who desire it we have dry fly leaders tied with a piece of gut to use for dropper fly.

**FLIES** The best grade dry flies are invariably tied on eyed hooks and not on gut.

**ACCESSORIES** The dry fly fisher requires a bottle of "Floateine" in order to make his flies float properly in quick-running water, and it is also desirable to have an atomizer with which to spray the flies, so as not to ruffle the wings or hackles. A gut cutter or pair of scissors is also most necessary because, in changing the fly the gut is cut and another fly tied on.

"Mucilin" for making line float and line greaser for applying same.







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